

Pastoral support and
mental health pathway
for children

Introduction

- There are currently 326 children who are looked after.
- Teenagers' mental health under severe pressure as pandemic continues - new research | Mental Health Foundation - [Teenagers' mental health under severe pressure as pandemic continues - new research | Mental Health Foundation](#)
- Mental Health and well being- following the pandemic - all children - an unknown
- The wide range of initiatives – great, but an unknown growing need
- Mental Health and Wellbeing group coordinates the approach locally
- The planned pathway - needs developing?
- The media coverage suggests there is a wide range of mental health needs following the pandemic lockdowns - however it will take time for schools to see and understand this in reality - how long ?
- Specific cohorts of concern - pre school children, Key Stage 1 - social and language delay, Y6 (transition to secondary) and Y7 (new to school and missing substantial time), 12-16 pupils, and Y10-13). The issue is relevant to all ages but these cohorts have particular issues to face.

Public Health

- What mental well being initiatives are already in place?
- Strong Young Minds and KOOTH
- PSHE Association membership, free for schools for 2020/22: access to curricular materials and resources to support mental health across all key stages
- Public Health Nursing Service: access to school nurses, face-face or via text messaging and available as a resource for schools and parents
- C&YP Health & Wellbeing Survey, covering mental health and emotional wellbeing, to be undertaken across the county and across all ages and abilities up to 25yrs from April 2021 (delayed from 2020 due to covid-19)
- Mental health and wellbeing of C&YP key considerations as part of Safeguarding Board priorities on child criminal exploitation and neglect strategy – to be delivered 2021/22
- An immediate short-term focus desirable across all educational settings, including early years, due to covid impact and limited access to face-face services and 'eyes on the child'

Pathways

- There is a need to develop the mental health pathway for children in care and care leavers in Herefordshire
- The draft children and young people mental health transformation plan for the CCG includes plans to review emotional wellbeing and mental health provision for looked after children in Herefordshire to inform commissioning priorities for 2022/23
- We have a concern that timescales result in continued unmet need for at least another year and that disparity in service provision between Herefordshire and Worcestershire where new model will be implemented between June-October 2021

Education Psychology Service

- Supporting teachers to meet the mental health and wellbeing of pupils rather than direct individual (face to face) work. We do this largely through training or consultation.
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- Early intervention case work: schools request our involvement, we meet the teachers, assess the child's needs (often this may involve assessment of their levels of anxiety, depression, self-esteem etc) and either meet with or provide written recommendations for strategies to help staff understand and support children. This may include signposting parents and teachers to other services locally (CAMHs, CLD) or nationally (NSPCC, NAS, DSA) etc.
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- Emotional literacy support assistants (ELSA'S). This is a national accredited qualification and we provide TA's in school with 5 days training in emotional wellbeing to become the schools 'key emotional literacy case worker'.
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- This year to support with going back to school and a recovery curriculum written by DfE/Anna Freud Centre we trained 65 teachers with a nominated mental health responsibility to understand psychological first aid, the strategies to support growth of relationships and whole school approaches to improve wellbeing in the pandemic.

Education Psychology Service

- Bereavement support is available.
- We are working with other services in additional needs on implementing a more trauma informed approach to behaviour across the authority, this involves understanding childhood adversity and will require working with staff to audit their own behaviour policies and school environment and approach to relationships.

The Virtual School

- The Virtual School offers:
 - Free training to all Herefordshire Schools on a range of topics affecting mental health (including trauma and attachment theory, ACEs, Emotion Coaching and Protective Behaviours)
 - STEPS workers (mentors) to support children who are experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties that are impacting on their education
 - A range of interventions delivered by educational psychologists to support them to understand and address social, emotional and mental health difficulties (foster carer consultations, school consultations, group problem solve meetings, and video interaction guidance (VIG))
 - Opportunities for looked after children and care leavers to meet one another so they do not feel they are alone and 'unique' in their experiences of being looked after
 - In the 2019/20 academic year the Virtual School funded 274 mentoring / SEMH interventions in schools using pupil premium funding

Next Steps

- Discussion and agreed next steps
- Support to further develop the pathway for children who are looked after and recent care leavers.